The Transformation Scene

"WHAT else am I to do, Lottie? What can I do?" With an angry gesture Gordon Hyde flung himself out of his chair and paced up and down the room. His wife rested both elbows on the table, watching him, with her small, pointed chin between her hands, and her tangled, pale yellow hair straggling over her face.

"If I stay here we shall all starve," continued young Hyde. "What do you say, Brabazon? Lottie can't be so selfish as to stop me. God knows I've done my best!"

Ted Brabazon, another member of the small company to which Mr. and Mrs. Hyde belonged, was a quiet, heavy young man, with a broad, indefinite face. He glanced quickly at Lottie as her husband spoke. He had known her from the time when she was an overworked little pantomime imp. Her childhood had been embittered by poverty and hardship, but from the day when she met Gordon Hyde the world had more or less worn a tint of rose color. She had been married three years, and was only 22.

They were now playing, as Lottie put it, "a joint in the smalls," meaning an engagement together in little towns, but Gordon had recently received a fairly good offer for a tour in South Africa. This was several years ago, before the war, or rumor of war.

Gordon was anxious and unhappy at leaving his wife and child; but at the same time there was a wild, unconfessed delight in his heart at the opportunity to throw aside the immediate troubles of a struggling, hand-to-mouth existence.

"I don't think you ought to take it!" said Ted Brabazon, slowly looking up, over the head of the child, who was sitting on his knee.

"It's easy to talk!" exclaimed Gordon. "But if a man doesn't make the most of splendid opportunities—"

"Ah! Five pounds a week, ain't it?" put in Brabazon, softly.

"Ted, I must go! I can't stand this beastly grind! It's too hard—I can't, can't bear it!"

He broke into a long, repressed passion of disappointed rage, and rested his head on his arm against the mantelpiece. The child began to cry dismally, and Ted Brabazon put him gently down.

"Buck up, old boy! One kid is enough in a family. S'long, Lottie! I don't shine in domestic drama!"

"Of course you must go, dear! It's a fine chance. Come along, Wallie." She stooped and picked up her baby. "There, give dad a kiss! We shall get on all right."

"Oh, I'll send you half my screw from the first week, Lottie! We've always gone halves, haven't we, darling? I don't care how I rough it!"

Lottie, who had been "roughing" it all her life, only smiled fondly. For three years he had unconsciously relied on her strength of character and purpose, thoroughly believing all the time in her utter dependence upon himself.

"I wish I could go with you," she sighed, twisting her thin fingers round his hand.

The longing tone of her voice, the tears in her drooping eyelashes and the weight of the child as he took it out of her arms suddenly smote him with a sense of responsibility; he drew her tangled hair and pale face against his breast.

"You must be a brave little woman!" he said, kindly, but ignoring her sympathy of a few minutes ago. "You must try to be self-reliant. I shall always be sending you money and things"—this was vague, but it made him feel better—"so you must wait till I come back, and all our ill luck will be changed."

For more than six months after Gordon had sailed away Ted Brabazon saw and heard nothing of Lottie Hyde. Then he met her in London at a theatrical agent's office.

"Lottie! Well, upon my word! What's the matter?"

Her whole appearance was changed. She was not only white and worn, but her light dress and summer hat were noticeably faded and poor. She commenced to talk hurriedly about little Wallie.

"But yourself, Lottie?"

"Oh, I'm all right. I've been at work off and on ever since I saw you last, Ted."

"Have you heard from Gordon?" he asked.

"Of course," she exclaimed. "He's getting on famously!"

"This hardly looks like it!" said Brabazon, lowering his voice and touching her faded dress and shabby little lace cape. "I'm worried over you, dear," he continued, slowly looking up at her with his kind, questioning eyes.

"I told you I've been in work!" she answered, gayly. "And there's always Gordon to fall back upon!" with a touch of pride. Can't ask you to come and see me; I've only got one room at present. I may go out with 'This World of Woe' in the autumn. Good-by, old boy."

Brabazon was sorely puzzled. He did not know where she lived. She had spoken gayly of her husband's success, but there was evidently no prospect of his return. At night, after their casual meeting in the agent's office, Ted lingered by the stage door of the theater, where Lottie was, as she told him, "walking on."

"Walking on! A guinea a week!" thought Brabazon.

He saw her come out, and followed, unseen, as she hurried away. It was no vulgar curiosity on his part. Wonder—vague pity—kindness of heart—drew him after the untiring little figure.

When she stopped at last in a small, dull street, more than an hour's walk from the theater, he watched her stoop to fit her key into the door, open it and disappear. After a little while he walked away, pondering and perplexed.

When the melodrama "This World of Woe" went on tour in the autumn Lottie was in the cast, playing a small part. She never spent a single penny that could possibly be saved. She sought for the cheapest lodgings and lived on the hardest fare. But her child, the dear companion of so many lonely hours, was always merry, strong and well.

So the months passed on, and "This World of Woe" came to a happy ending.

Ted Brabazon found himself in a provincial town at Christmas, with the comedy of half a dozen scenes on his capable shoulders. To his great surprise—as he said—Lottie Hyde was a twinkling star of the same pantomime.

On the second night, sitting in his dressing-room, Brabazon began to puzzle, as he often did, over the reticence of the girl he had known so long. The transformation scene was rapidly approaching, and his own part was nearly over.

Suddenly there was a tap at the door, and the next minute a couple of hands were clapped on his shoulders, and he was face to face with Gordon Hyde.

"Ted!—dear old chap!—Lottie doesn't know I've come! How are you? How's my wife and the boy? Shake yourself up, old man."

With disconnected words like these, laughing and shaking Brabazon's hand all the time, Gordon rattled on, happy, proud, prosperous, full of excitement and news.

"Well, I want to surprise Lottie! Such a year of it, Ted! Such a struggle! Stranded in Craddock three months after I landed. Then we ran 'a commonwealth' for a few weeks—I tell you I was on my beam ends!"

He threw his head back and laughed again. Brabazon wondered whether Lottie was dancing on the stage at that minute.

"I don't think any other fellow could have pulled through," Gordon went on, with sudden gravity. "If it hadn't been for Lottie's good luck I should have starved, like a dog, old boy!"

Ted Brabazon started. Lottie's "good luck" had never touched a point beyond three pounds a week.

"Of course I wrote and told her all about it, and she sent me word that she was playing in London with a better salary than I ever expected. But that's old news to you, isn't it, Ted?"

Brabazon began to understand the reticence and the poverty that had puzzled him so long.

"Somehow I got to Kimberley," continued Gordon. "Everybody drifts to Kimberley! Then Lottie sent another budget of good news. What a splendid production that 'World of Woe' must have been! I could hardly believe that my wife was playing the chief part! Well, I turned my hand to anything that came along. At last, on a lucky day, Bickerstaff's company struck Kimberley. One of his men broke down—there was my chance. He gave me a trial, and I've been with him ever since; he brought me over. What do you say, Ted?"

"Has your wife been sending you money from the first?"

"Yes—ridiculous little doles!" exclaimed Gordon. "I don't want to complain, old boy; it's quite right that she and the child should be saved from my hard luck. But, still, to send a fellow a guinea at a time—once it was 18 shillings, upon my soul! She was earning so much—she wrote me such cheery letters—Ted, I can't understand it!"

Slowly, in his own quiet way, Brabazon began to tell Gordon Hyde the truth. He drew the picture of the lonely girl, with her child in her arms; he shattered the lie that her love had prompted her to tell; there had been no London engagement, no success, no stroke of luck. He described the wretched rooms where she had lived, and those long, weary walks through the streets at night to save a few pence. As the story of her loyal silence and dauntless courage went on Gordon put up his hand suddenly to shield his eyes from the light, and his head drooped forward.

There was a long silence; then Brabazon spoke again:

"I must go down; shall I tell her?"

"Yes!" Gordon clapped his friend's hand as they looked at each other. "But leave me here for a minute, Ted; I'll follow!"

As Lottie rang through the wings to take her place behind an enormous dark fan in the center of the transformation scene she felt a hand catch at hers, and, looking hastily around, she saw that it was Ted Brabazon. He stopped and spoke a few words. Lottie gave a cry of joy, and clapped her hands together over her breast, as Ted supported her for a minute on his arm.

"Hurry up, you girls!" said the stage manager. "Places! Lights! Clear! Right, you are!"

Lottie sprang into position. She forgot her surroundings and swayed a little on her narrow platform, waiting, waiting!

As the transformation scene displayed its wonders, the big, black fan began to move. Slowly it slipped downward, inch by inch. A soft, rosy circle of light fell on the figure of Lottie Hyde. Her arms were outstretched; all her pale, yellow hair fell over her shoulders. Her face had lost its drawn look of trouble, but her parted lips trembled, and her eyes were brimming over with happy tears.

Color and brilliance flooded the stage, and then, one by one, soft lights faded into darkness. The music died away. The curtain slowly fell, and Gordon Hyde, breaking away from his friend, rushed into the middle of the stage and lifted his wife from her narrow platform, in a passion of love and remorse.

Ted Brabazon watched them for a minute, and then, without a word, he slowly walked away.—Mainly About People.

ENFORCES THE LAW.

Washington Blessed with an Efficient Chief of Police.

Hard on So-Called Gentlemen Who Are Devoted to Gambling and the Excessive Indulgence in Ardent Spirits.

(Special Washington Letter.)

MUSCULAR moral suasion seems to be necessary in some places. In one of the sovereign states of this republic the laws prohibiting the sale of alcoholic and other liquor cannot be enforced without force; hatchets and other implements being used without discrimination or consideration of moral laws. Moral suasion is out of the question in that locality.

When officials charged with the execution of the laws violate or seem to violate their oaths of office, public sentiment often takes the place of law and order. This accounts for the resort of unthinking people to lynch law, which means the violation of all law. Fortunately for the reputation of the national capital the officials here are men of the highest order of integrity and they usually enforce the laws to the best of their ability. We have an unusually efficient chief of police.

Maj. Richard Sylvester was for almost 20 years the Washington correspondent of several western newspapers, while he acted at the same time as chief clerk of police headquarters. In his newspaper work he became well acquainted with the congressman from the Eighteenth congressional district of Ohio, one William McKinley, Jr., and when that congressman became president of our republic he remembered Sylvester and appointed him chief of police of the District of Columbia; and he made no mistake. In making that appointment he selected the man of all men who knew most, practically, about the work of the police department, and a man of superior education, experience and probity of character.

The chairman of the inaugural committee has made Maj. Sylvester chairman of the committee on public order during the inaugural ceremonies; and everybody here approves the selection as a wise one. Our chief of police has already taken steps to conserve the public order during that important ceremonial, and when the time comes his additional special policemen will be thoroughly drilled and instructed concerning the duties which they must rigorously perform; and also concerning the limitations of the authority intrusted to them.

The limitations of police power cannot be too well defined for such an occasion. The writer has in vivid memory an occurrence during the inauguration of President Harrison March 4, 1889, when a domineering mounted policeman, instead of forcing back the crowd at a corner actually drove his horse into a crowd, trampling citizens down and seriously injuring one of the state officials of Wisconsin, who was unavoidably in the crowd because of the loss of h' horse by a runaway before the procession started.

But, before preparing for the presidential inauguration, Maj. Sylvester has inaugurated a system of moral suasion which is rather intolerable to gentlemen in the realm of society who are devoted to gambling and excessive indulgence in drinking ardent spirits. He has decided to make gambling practically impossible during inauguration week by employing additional detectives, who will carefully watch for crooks of all sorts; and all suspected gambling places will be closely watched.

Moreover, our chief of police has decided upon a permanent enforcement of the law against the sale and use of liquor after the midnight hour.

MAJ. RICHARD SYLVESTER.
(Chief of Police of the District of Columbia.)

This is not only to apply during inauguration week, but for all time. While saloons are being smashed in another quarter of the country, all unlawful abuse of the liquor selling privilege will be prevented here by the strict administration of the statutory laws by the guardians of the peace. There will be no selling of whisky after midnight, nor on Sundays, at any point nor under any circumstances.

One of the favorite devices of men of means has been to organize social clubs, under the guise of law, and the authorities have recognized certain rights of such alleged clubs. But that is now a matter of past history, of the recent past. The chief of police has decided that not even in these alleged clubs shall liquor be sold at unseasonable and unreasonable hours. This is an innovation which has staggered many of the staggerers who have been accustomed to suppose that the laws of the land applied to all others than themselves. From henceforth the men with dollars to burn will have no more right to assassinate their physical strength by the unlawful use of alcoholic poison than the poor and ignorant who dissipate their earnings while those dependent upon them for food and clothing suffer in obscurity and miserable silence.

Truth telling is not always popular, but sometimes men who are required to portray real life in the national capital are expected to tell the whole truth without evasion or indirection. This story of the determination of our chief of police would be incomplete without the bald statement that clubs and hotels have long been in the habit of violating the laws. Policemen have been permitted to secretly get their whisky in dark corri-

HELD UP BY HIS FRIENDS.

dors adjoining the barrooms of hotels. They have been admitted by kitchen entrances to club rooms, and have been served with whatever they might choose to order. Then, with the poison in their stomachs, they have been deaf to all that they might otherwise hear.

There are and always have been all sorts of clubs here, the naming of which would require reams of paper. For two or three years there was a press club in this city, but it died almost seven years ago; died under the hammer of an auctioneer. None of the leading correspondents were members of it when it was sold. It had fallen into the hands of men who used it as a gamblers' den, a whisky den, a home for indigent and weaklings, who were alleged to be newspaper men, a place where whisky could be obtained at all hours and on Sundays; and, nirable dictu, all on credit. The end was inevitable, and the auctioneer had the best of it—better far than the unfortunate creditors.

There have been congressional clubs in almost every hotel. In these places men occupying high official positions, one of them a speaker of the house of representatives, gathered nightly for gambling and drinking. Nobody in the hotel, except the proprietor, would know of the existence of the congressional club. Nevertheless, there would be nightly meetings, where cards would be shuffled until early morning, where wine would be kept constantly opening, and where large stakes of money would constantly change hands. The hotel barrooms were opened all day Sunday, and those who were patrons during the week were welcome on the Sabbath day, although the front doors and blinds were closed. Probably it is so in other cities; it certainly has been so in this city for many years.

Then there have been army and navy clubs, metropolitan, athletic and other clubs, within the walls of which all laws have been set at defiance. But Chief Sylvester has closed all of them, without the use of a hatchet. The governors and managers of all of the clubs know that he will enforce the law. They all know that he can invade their precincts with detectives whom they would not suspect; and that when he issues a police order or regulation he will sleeplessly enforce the edict. Therefore they are not trying to evade the order.

The policemen who have been protecting the hotels have been given warning, and they must fulfill their functions faithfully or lose their positions. Incidentally this will give us a sober police force in those localities, although it must be admitted that even the policemen in hotel precincts are known to have been always on the prudential side of their cups, albeit they have taken their regular drinks without expense to themselves. But no man, in uniform or otherwise, is capable of performing his best functions while alcoholic poison courses through his veins.

In telling the truth about the congressmen and their clubs it would be unfair to permit the people to suppose that all congressmen spend their time and their money in dallying with "wein, weib und gesang." Nor are all of them given to gambling. But it is truth to say that quite a number of them have been so habituated from time immemorial, in the brief history of our republic.

One representative, whose term hastens to a close, was taken into a private congressional gathering and robbed of $3,975 between ten p. m. and three a. m. by those whom he called intimate friends. On the following afternoon, when he crawled from under the table, and realized what he had done, all of his checks had been cashed, and he had no redress. It is just as well for him, as well as for his constituents, that he goes out of congress.

SMITH D. FRY.

Treasure Trove in Bustle.

Soon after the death of Mrs. Betsey C Thilmen, in Oneonta, N. Y., a relative noticed an innocent-looking bustle hanging on the wall. It was taken down, and found to be rather heavy. An examination disclosed carefully packed away in the bustle $250 in gold.

Unlike Anybody Else.

Obstinacy, like most other qualities, has many forms of manifesting itself.

"I do think," said one of the group of nephews who were discussing "Uncle Chauncey's" peculiarities, "he's the contrariest man alive."

"What new light have you had on the subject?" asked one of the others.

"Well, he's so contrary," was the rejoinder, "that if he sees a newspaper advertisement headed: 'Don't read this!' he doesn't read it!"—Youth's Companion.

There is one serious objection to establishing communication with Mars. It will inevitably bring on more dialect stories.—The Memphis Commercial-Appeal.

The easiest note to write is the hardest to pay.—Atchison Globe.